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A COMPLETE

REFUTATION

OF THE

Malevolent Charges,

EXHIBITED AGAINST

The Friends of Reform in and about Sheffield. H

WITH SOME

REFLECTIONS

ON

The Declaration agreed to at the Cutlers-Hall

On Monday, December 31, 1792.

By a Member of the Constitutional Society.

Six pence

PREFACE

As the following work may probably fall into the hands of some persons who have not seen the Dissertation which gave rise to it, it will be necessary to re-publish it, that they may be better able to judge of both. And however harmless that paper may seem in itself, yet I have no doubt but every impartial reader, when acquainted with the whole business, will acknowledge the necessity of replying to it.

I have been assured that it has been bestowed upon some persons on this side of the water, (saying they were as black as my own skin, &c.) &c. I have therefore treated such a piece of nonsense with as much contempt as it deserved. But as no one has been able to distinguish of those who have been so easily misled, I have ventured to do it as my feeble abilities would permit. How my intention has succeeded, I shall leave to the decision of the public.



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PREFACE.

AS the following work may probably fall into the hands of some persons who have not seen the *Declaration* which gave rise to it, it will be necessary to re-publish it, that they may be better able to judge of both. And however harmless that paper may seem in itself; yet I have no doubt but every impartial reader, when acquainted with the whole business, will acknowledge the necessity of replying to it.

Many persons who signed it have bestowed unlimited abuse on those who did not (saying they were as black as they had been represented, &c.) otherwise I had most probably treated such a piece of nonsense with that silent contempt it deserved. But as no one else hath attempted a vindication of those who have been so grossly insulted, I have ventured to do it, as far as my feeble abilities would permit. How far my intention has succeeded, I shall leave to the decision of the public.

*Extract from the Declaration of a " Meeting of the
" Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of
" Sheffield, held at the Cutlers-Hall on the 31st of
" December, 1792, to consider of the mode of de-
" claring their firm and inviolable attachment to
" the excellent form of government, by King, Lords
" and*

PREFACË.

“and Commons, under which they have the pecu-
“liar happiness to live.

“ We hereby freely and sincerely profess and declare our most faithful, loyal, and inviolable attachment to his majesty's person and government; and our determined resolution, with our most zealous and vigilant exertions, to defend, support, and preserve the most excellent constitution of this kingdom, settled and established on the principles asserted and confirmed at the glorious and happy Revolution in 1688; adapted by the act of settlement, and subsequent improvements, to the exigencies of succeeding times; and calculated for progressive advances towards perfection, under the superintending care of the legislature, in whose wisdom we confide for taking such measures and enacting and providing such laws as are requisite for the present state of the kingdom, correspondent to the reasonable desires and the real sense of the nation at large, and adequate to the security of the persons and property, the liberty and happiness of the people, and the stability of the throne of the prince.”

of those who are the objects of
tal, and may in the course of time, and
operations are nevertheless too frequent
infect, and where the eye cannot

But that which more immediately concerns
the present reflections, was the manner in which
in the present case we are to be governed
(as signified by the words) "as the
ordinance of the Lord shall direct us."
obtain the advocates of moral studies. It is upon

and Common, under which they have the
 We hereby freely and sincerely protest
 declare our most faithful, loyal and inviolable
 attachment to the Constitution, and our determined
 and our vigilant exertions to defend, support
 and preserve the most excellent Constitution of this
 kingdom, and of the rights of the principles
 asserted and confirmed by the glorious and happy
 Revolution of 1688, and by the act of settle-

Complete Refutation,

&c. &c.

OF all the various means mankind make use
 of to provoke and irritate the minds of each
 other, that of *vilifying*, for no other reason than a
 difference of opinion, seems the most absurd and
 inexcusable. The force of this remark is fully
 evinced by the many calumnies industriously
 circulated in general against those who have asso-
 ciated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary
 Reform, but more particularly in this place. And
 though Slander is a poison which works its way
 unseen, and where the eye cannot trace, yet its
 operations are nevertheless too frequently success-
 ful, and may in the course of time effect the ruin
 of those who are the objects of it.

But that which more immediately gave rise to
 the present reflections, was the paper alluded to
 in the preface to this work; the purport of which
 (as signified by the chairman) was *to wipe off the
 odium which has been thrown on the town*: which
 odium the advocates of State-abuses charge upon

the Constitutional Society, and their adherents. And the author of the present work being a member of that Society, feels it a duty incumbent on him to retort upon such base calumniators, and fix the obloquy on those who are more justly entitled

The present Reforming Societies were occasioned by the many abuses which so notoriously prevail in the different departments of the Government of this country, the principal source of which is the unequal and inadequate representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament: to remedy which is the principal object they have in view: and the most likely method of accomplishing this great end is by propagating general knowledge of the principles of Government amongst the great mass of the people, by whom it is supported. Such institutions, which for their object the welfare and happiness of mankind, cannot fail to meet the approbation and support of every honest and liberal-minded man, who is not blinded by prejudice, or influenced by interested motives against it. And as it will eventually strike at the root of corruption, it cannot but cause outbreaks of dangerous innovations and drive from that tribe of caterpillars who fattened on the spoils of the people. It is well known that its odium has been cast, on its institutions for abuses and their adherents,

rents, on every town where the poor have been taught to think for themselves; and unless they are convinced they think wrong, or persuaded to think otherwise, the odium will still remain. by teaching the poor their duty, and shewing them their rights as men, be considered as odious it should be the glory of every honest man to be covered with them as long as he lives.

Those who wish to know how this town has acquired a greater degree of odium than others, may be better informed by applying to a certain limb of the law, who represented this society in London as a set of drunken blackguards, at a time when they consisted of near two thousand members, and more than half the town of their principles. It has been by such means as these that Sheffield has acquired its present reputation; therefore let those who brought on the odium be at the trouble of taking it off again. Had they even deserved such a report, it would have been more honourable than the character of *pimp* or *spy*; and it is currently reported there are several in the town. Were such unprincipled wretches employed to inspect the conduct of idle knaves, instead of that of honest industrious citizens, they would be much better employed, and by that means render some service to their country.

The *Declaration* itself is like our code of laws, great part of which are enveloped in mystery, so that

that none but their makers should understand them, and even they are oft puzzled to explain them. Its chief merit lies in being so nicely calculated for the exigencies of succeeding times; that is, for any reform or no reform. If they think a reform necessary, why not declare it? If they think none necessary, why not do the same? Honest plain dealing is best, and most characteristic of the English nation. Compare it with the language made use of by the legislators of France, when under the most despotic government, and the people in the most slavish condition in Europe. I will quote, as an instance, the answer returned to two edicts sent by their minister to be registered for fresh taxes: "That with such a revenue as the nation then supported, the name of *taxes* ought not to be mentioned but for the purpose of reducing them;" and so threw them both out. This was plain, open, and unequivocal language, consistent with the dignity of men: but this differs very little from that slavish sort of language made use of to William Prince of Orange at the time called the *Glorious Revolution*, "that we most faithfully submit to you ourselves, our heirs, and our posterity for ever." And so far from being calculated to answer any good purpose, it appears to me to have a very different tendency; as I believe all these servile addresses originated in a ministerial manoeuvre, to feel the pulses of the people,

people, in order to draw this nation into a war with France, which will be the most likely means of bringing about an insurrection. And if such a calamity should take place, it will be our inevitable destruction: for it is plainly foreseen that the first effect would be a stagnation in trade; and if the enormous price of provisions, now trade is good, puts them almost beyond the reach of the poor, what must be the consequence when it becomes bad? or, in short, whose property will be safe?

1. It is also remarked in the *aforesaid Declaration*, that *the Constitution is calculated for progressive improvement towards perfection*. But, instead of answering this wise and salutary end, has it not been in a continual state of retrogression towards corruption? This is one of the many veils made use of to cover the defects of the Constitution, in order to lull the people into a torpid insensibility of those abuses which so notoriously prevail in it. Is the changing of annual to triennial, and from that to septennial parliaments, an improvement? Are those laws an improvement which give an exclusive privilege of taking game to those who contribute nothing towards its support; whilst the farmer who feeds it is prohibited the taking of a single hare or partridge, on pain of a heavy penalty, or imprisonment? Is the present state of our representation an improvement, where a great

part of the electors make a practice of selling their votes to the highest bidder? Even some of the boroughs have dwindled away till there are not left more voters than they return members. At a place in Sussex five stones in a wall return two members, and at a place in this county, an oak-tree sends another: yet, notwithstanding this mock-representation, there are to be found those who have the effrontery to tell us we are equally represented.* But the evil does not rest here: for it is well known that they who *buy* will *sell*. Mr. PITT himself declared, that "votes were notoriously bought and sold in the House of Commons."

Did they sell themselves only, were it to the West-India merchants, I should not complain; but they sell their country too.

The many evils arising from the corrupt state of the representation, are too numerous to mention in this work: but as this is their principal source, it cannot be too speedily removed; otherwise our

much-

* May it not here be asked, Is that an improvement which not only gives to the Clergy 18 or 20,000l. a year, but sanctions them in taking one-tenth of the produce of the earth, which consequently raises the price of provisions in proportion? This is a continual cramp to industry; as the farmer will not advance his money to improve a barren piece of land, whilst the parson claims a tenth of such improvement, without contributing any thing towards the expense.

much-boasted Constitution cannot stand long, as it has already begun to sap the foundation. Is this then a Constitution which deserves any other kind of attachment than that of paying taxes to support it? And has this or any other town refused that support, to make such a measure necessary? No prudent man will attach himself to a prostitute, knowing her to be such.

But as it is become the fashionable folly of the present age for people to make public declarations of their attachment to something, if I thought it necessary to declare mine (in order to avoid singularity), it should be this :--- "I am firmly attached

" to my friends, and *inviolably* so to my country ;

" and, as long as they continue to deserve the

" same, will use my utmost endeavours to defend,

" support, and preserve them, *amongst whom I have*

" *the peculiar happiness to live.*"

But

The following Queries are submitted to the consideration of the *Parliaments of Government* :

1. Are the people represented in Parliament as they ought to be, consistent with the fundamental principles of the Constitution?

2. Are the people represented as they ought to be, consistent with the immutable laws of Reason and Justice?

3. Is any period of time whatever improper to render justice to the people?

4. Is there any reason to suppose that the country will be less happy, less prosperous, or less free, by a more equal representation in the House of Commons?

5. Is there any reason to apprehend that the number of Place-men and Pensioners, or the enormous expences of Government, will be increased by universal suffrage and annual elections?

But the question is, Who are the people that are happy? the rich, or the poor? The former may, the latter cannot, unless happiness consists in hunger and nakedness. I should be glad to know what difference it would make to a great part of our industrious poor (setting aside the trial by jury), whether they lived under our Government, or that of the greatest despot in Europe? Could they have more taxes squeezed out of them? Could they have more work laid upon them? or, Could they have less or coarser provisions allowed them? And, in order to strengthen what I have advanced, I will quote the words of a noble Duke to some noble Lords, on the motion for abolishing the Slave-Trade: 'That they were better provided for than many of the poor in this country.' As to the state of those miserable wretches, it is well known, from the evidence given in the House of Commons, to need any farther comment. But that the poor of this country should be told they are a free and happy people, and at the same time that the slaves in the Indies are better provided for than they, is the most paradoxical piece of impudence that could possibly be made use of, and too gross for the most illiterate of them not to resent.

Another objectionable part is *the confidence put in the legislature to reform itself*. As well might a traveller confide in the goodness of a highwayman not to rob him. We have confided in them too long.

long. The only thing in which we can confide, must be in our own exertions: these will not deceive us.

Another objection is to the *sincere declaration of a most inviolable attachment to his majesty's person and government*. Now suppose, for instance, his majesty was to act in the same arbitrary manner as James II. as there is no condition or proviso against it; what must be the consequence if the people found the same measures necessary? Some would prefer the interest and happiness of eight millions to that of one man, and the rest would probably sacrifice their country to avoid what they would imagine the crime of perjury. The subjects of James II. teemed with loyalty and attachment before his abdication, and declared they would risk their lives and fortunes in defence of his sacred person and government; but when the hour of danger arrived, it was every man for himself. It is an old, but just observation, that the quickest promisers are often the slowest performers: and unless his majesty gives more reason for disaffection than he has hitherto done, I believe he would find his best friends among those who have made no promises at all, had he occasion to try them.

But if we put the most favourable construction upon it, it does not correspond with our principles. What we want is an equal representation of the people, and that choice to be made annually.

Both

Both these rights existed from the time of Alfred to Henry VI. and as but one of them remained at the Revolution of 1688 (the time it refers to), we can have no union, short of a very unnatural one, with it. Allowing we had no proof of this right existing at that or any other time, we need not search in old rolls or musty parchments to find it: we have a better claim;---the right of Nature, which is the gift of God. And as we are no longer in possession of this right, it is a clear case that we must either have been tricked or robbed of it; and though the robbers have been in long possession, it does not strengthen their claim or weaken ours. They obtained it by force, we will regain it by reason: for our arms are Reason, and our shield Truth. With these we will fight, till we conquer or die.

Suppose, for instance, that every town in the nation (or, as improperly called, the three kingdoms---for it has long been found out that nations are not the property of kings) continued to walk in the dark paths of ignorance and superstition, and chose to make a public declaration of it, no one capable of judging betwixt right and wrong would look upon it otherwise than a declaration of their folly, and therefore excite his pity or provoke his anger; but if for the purpose of misleading others, would merit contempt. "When I was a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

At the election at Durham, which ensued the coalition parliament, I recollect a person producing a written paper, the purport of which was, that the representatives should be returned only on condition of supporting Mr. Pitt's administration. But the electors, with the spirits of freemen, spurned at so unnatural a proposition as to restrain their free will, and convert them into such inanimate beings as are the chief causes of our present grievances. Yet, notwithstanding this defeat, he made another attempt, in which he was more successful, which was at the recovery of his majesty. This was a bait for all, and easily swallowed. Away went he with his posthum; and, being so artfully and ingeniously prepared, it had the desired effect. Many tried their skill on the occasion, but none proved so salutary as this; and in return for such eminent services, he was rewarded with the honour of knighthood. Should the promoters of the present addresses be actuated by the same motives, and meet with the same reward, I am doubtful whether there will be found so many windmills as Don Quixotes to attack them.

At the town-hall in Sheffield a gentleman of the ecclesiastical order, said that their interests (meaning those of the rich) were inseparable from those of the poor, and that they would all join in a petition for a parliamentary reform when the time was seasonable. As that time is now arrived, they cannot, without forfeiting word or honour,

refuse

refuse it. It has been applied for both in peace and war, but the time was unreasonable: so if there be a proper time, it must be now, being betwixt both.

They talk of *interests*, and *reasonable demands*. Do we want any thing unreasonable? They must either shew that we do, or leave room to suspect that gentleman's veracity in saying their interests were inseparable from ours.

That day's business brings to my recollection the interference of the chairman, to appease what he supposed the people's rage or anger. Another excused himself for being present, because he thought the peace of the town endangered; which shews how little they knew of the dispositions of the people. It is not in the power of any one of them to point out either the time or place where the friends to a reform have manifested signs of outrage, or any thing else which might endanger the peace of the town. Then why make use of such imputations against those who are equally, if not more peaceably disposed, than themselves? They are stimulated by a more noble impulse than that of revenge: for, having long endured the galling yoke of oppression, each countenance now displays the lively sensations of their hearts, which ardently glow at the pleasing prospect of relief.

Another paper has since made its appearance, recommending

recommending to the reforming societies '*a strict observance of the laws, and a peaceable conduct*.' Had the author of that paper done them justice, he would not only have applauded them for a strict observance of all those things, but have recommended their conduct as an example worthy the imitation of their enemies.

As to his disapprobation of *public rejoicings and processions*, I disapprove them as much as he or any one. But why does he not point his arrows where they more immediately apply? against such as are continually stirring up the people to that mean and pitiful custom of burning the effigy of Mr. PAINÉ, that great philanthropist and luminary of the present age, for doctrines they are unable to refute, and which many of them have not read. These customs, which are in themselves not only low and brutish, but indicate a thirst for blood, cannot be too severely reprobated; and I almost tremble for those who have set the example, when the people who have been misled find out the trick that has been played upon them. If he alludes to the rejoicings and procession at the success of the French arms over a gang of ruffians who designed to rob and murder them, he should remember it has long been the custom in different parts of Europe to rejoice on similar occasions, when their blood-hounds have been sent out for the same purpose; and, after butchering thousands
of

of their fellow-creatures, even insult that God whom they pretend to serve, by offering up prayers and thanksgivings for such victories, as if he delighted in the shedding of human blood; and though he may suffer them for a time, *yet for all these things will I be avenged*, saith the Lord.

If the French have done wrong in making a Revolution (that is, in overturning one government, and establishing another in its room), he should recollect that we have long stood guilty of the same crime; and if it be wrong in the poor to make public rejoicings, as it were the rich who first brought up the custom, they should be the first to set the example of abolishing it.

With respect to our much-boasted constitution, why is it not dragged forth from its hiding-place, and laid open for public inspection? Is it something sacred, which ought not to be exposed to the vulgar eye? or is it so defective, and enveloped in mystery, that it will not bear the examination of day-light? And if it be good in theory, why is it not put in practice? A constitution which has not a majority of the people for its constituent authority, is nothing less than a fraudulent deception, and a barefaced imposition, exercised by the one party over the other, who are in no better condition than of a slavish submission to the wills and capricious laws of the rest. Yet they tell us we are a free people, and that we enjoy perfect liberty.

berty. But in what do we enjoy either? * It is true we have the liberty to work; so have the slaves in the Indies, otherwise they would be of no use to the owners. We have also the liberty of petitioning those who have an interest in rejecting our petitions. And then (if we are not satisfied) we have sometimes the free liberty of transporting ourselves into another country. †

As all governments, which are what they ought to be, are instituted for the protection and happiness of the governed, as well as to promote virtue and restrain vice, it naturally follows that they can be vested with no legal power of controul over either our words or deeds, except such as tend to inflame or stir up the minds of others to any act of violence or injustice; consequently they have no right to restrain the exercising faculty of thought --- This is an inherent right, implanted in man by the all-wise supreme Author of our being. Then shall Englishmen tamely submit to have this invaluable

* The Duke of Richmond, in a letter to W. Farkland, Esq; High-Sheriff of Sussex, Jan. 1783, said, that his sentiments were formed on the experience of 26 years; which, whether in or out of government, had equally convinced him that a restoration of a genuine House of Commons was the only remedy against that system of corruption which had brought the nation to disgrace and poverty, and threatened it with the loss of liberty; that one fourth second part of the nation disposed of the properties of the whole, and had their lives and liberties at command; and that many of the small boroughs were either become the private property of individuals, or were notoriously sold to the highest bidder: so that the counties and great cities were in fact, as well as the great mass of the people, swallowed up in the system of corruption.

† Some of our law-makers have dared to call Truth a libel, and others

valuable blessing wrested from them by any man or set of men? No. Nature revolts at the idea. 'Tis a subversion of the sacred principle on which it is founded, and repugnant to the divine will of the Majesty of Heaven.

We are continually pestered with inflammatory papers, charging us with being *republicans* and *levellers*. Could those infatuated wretches foresee their evil tendency, they would cease of themselves: for the voice of Reason must prevail, and that ere long; when they may have cause to repent of their temerity, by inculcating notions amongst the lower class of people which otherwise would not have been thought of. Has an equal division of private property taken place either in America or France? or are those principles recommended

maintain that the rich and poor are equally amenable to the laws of this country. But it requires very little judgment to discover, or ability to prove, the fallacy of both these assertions.

Mr. Fox said, in the House of Commons, that "there was not a single assertion in his majesty's speech that was not false; not one insinuation that was not unfounded." The result of which is evident—that one of their speeches must be so. Now if a poor man gives a false evidence in a court of justice, he is tried; and, if convicted (which generally follows for want of money), is put in the pillory. Yet the evidence given by those two gentlemen, and in the highest court in the nation, was no more noticed by the incorruptible judges of that tribunal, than if each or both their testimonies had been true. Now as we have a law which when put in force is so degrading to those who tell lies, would it not be both absurd and ridiculous to subject those who tell the truth to the same punishment—a heavy fine, or a long imprisonment? If we are governed by such laws as these, well may we say, "From the hands of such law-makers, good Lord, deliver us!"

commended, either by Mr. PAINÉ, or any other writer who has laid down a plan of reform? or are they inculcated by any of the Societies for Constitutional Information? I challenge any one of the whole tribe of parasites and panders to substantiate such a charge. Then what good end can the doctrines of these lying prophets answer? Like a mist that obscures the sun, they may conceal the truth for a time; but, such is the irresistible force of both when once they begin to dawn, that, as an impetuous torrent, they bear down all before them, and,

Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind!

It is true we gave our public approbation of Mr. Paine's writings, as having derived more knowledge from them than from those of any other author on the subject: and so far am I from changing my opinion, that I wish they were universal as the Bible, and both better understood—being best calculated to remove that political bandage of ignorance and superstition which has for so many ages held the people of this country in darkness. And, notwithstanding they have been condemned by a jury,* they will still retain the tribute of grateful remembrance from every true patriot, and his name transmitted with reverence to future ages. But to approve is one thing, and to put in practice another. Those

* For the means by which juries are impannelled, see his Address to the Addressers.

Those who charge us with the levelling system are our vilest enemies, and most beneath our notice: for conscious of their own inability to answer us by argument, they have recourse to pitiful invective, to reduce us to a level with themselves. The only levellers who have made their appearance are such as call themselves Church and King Folks, Royal True Blues, &c. at Birmingham, Manchester, Cambridge, and elsewhere; who are not content with plunder, but destroy the habitations of their peaceable neighbours, for a difference of opinion in Religion or Politics. These are the levellers; and why have not some of the associations for prosecuting such people taken them into custody?

There are others who blame us for meddling with business that does not concern us. They tell us, that they find work enough at home in the day, and at night they are ready for bed; and that we ought to do the same. This story reminds me of the Swinish Multitude Mr. Burke alludes to, as he certainly meant to make a distinction betwixt those who think for themselves and those who do not think at all; for the business of swine is to eat, drink, and sleep; and those which are not otherwise provided for will labour in the day for food, and at night lie down to rest; and this way of life, which is past away in seeming satisfaction to them, is begun, continued, and ended,

and,

and, but for the little transactions of the small circle of their acquaintance, go out of the world equally wise as when they came in. But is this consistent with the dignity or duty of a rational being? By no means. Man was born into the world for nobler purposes than to become a beast of burden. But I pity, not insult their debased condition; and only blame them for continually grunting at those who wish to raise them from it.

It is surprising that the gentlemen in this and other manufacturing towns should oppose a reform in parliament. Do they fancy themselves incompetent to the task? or that their honesty will not be proof against temptation? If so, their fears are groundless: for the well-known probity of all their commercial transactions contradicts the one; and as to the other, it would be too gross an insult to suppose any of them inferior to many of those inanimate figures that compose so great a part of our state machine, whose only requisite qualification is the organ of sight, that they may view the minister when he puts a question.

The principal part of our present grievances have arisen from this source, *viz.* The want of a sufficient number of merchants and manufacturers in the House, to preserve the balance of power against the dealers in land. For what but this monopoly of landed interest has raised the price of provisions to its present enormous height? Had there been
such

such a power as this to have checked it, the Corn Act had never passed into a law.* And if such a power be not speedily appointed, for aught we know, they may pass another to double the burthen, if the exigences of succeeding times will enable us to bear it.

Consider well these things, ye who pay divine adoration at the shrine of aristocratic grandeur! Ye who solace yourselves in the midst of plenty and abundance, suffer the voice of Humanity to plead in behalf of your much-oppressed fellow-countrymen, whose hearts, instead of pouring forth the effusions of gladness to the bountiful hand of Providence, are teeming from hearts of affliction the tears of bitterness and woe! **This**

* Perhaps it may not be amiss here to quote a few passages from an act passed in the 26th year of the reign of his present majesty, which will give a better idea of the means and manœuvres made use of by the rich to grind the poor, viz. "That it shall from henceforth be lawful to buy the several sorts of corn to sell again, and to lay it up in granaries, whatever the price thereof may be. That the average price of wheat shall be 44s. per quarter, Rye 28s. Barley 22s. Oats 14s. &c. and when under these prices the following bounties are payable on exportation, viz. on wheat 5s. per quarter, Rye 3s. barley 2s. 6d. oats 2s. &c. So that we not only suffer the corn to be carried from us, but give so much money on every quarter into the bargain. Now if it be lawful for the landholder to send away the corn to keep it up to this price when plentiful, it should not only be made lawful for us to import it when scarce, to keep it down to the same standard, but have the same bounties allowed for fetching it as are given for taking it away. Instead of which, we cannot import it without the following restrictions, viz. Wheat, if under 50s. per quarter, 24s. duty—rye, if under 34s. per quarter, 22s. duty—barley, if under 25s. per quarter, 22s. duty—the rest in proportion. For more particulars I shall refer you to the act itself, and leave every candid and impartial reader to make his own comments.

This is likewise the moving cause of so many bankruptcies daily happening; and if a remedy be not soon applied, the nation will probably share the same fate.† The means of preventing such dire calamities are now in a great measure within your own power; and which, if neglected, you may soon or late have cause to lament. Then you will be convinced that by opposing the friends of Reform you have been acting in direct opposition to your own interests. You all know the misfortunes which have lately happened through a revolution in one country; therefore it is your interest as well as duty to lend every assistance in your power towards preventing the necessity of one in this. For be assured, that the more strenuous the advocates of state-abuses are in opposition to those who are only wishing to remove them, the more sure and speedy will that be brought about which they all so much dread.

If you wish to conciliate the affections, and secure the esteem of your fellow-townsmen, call a meeting, requesting all those to attend who have cause to complain, and lay their grievances before you, which you must convince them you will endeavour

† Two hundred years ago the English paid half a million of taxes; at present, seventeen millions! So that where one penny was paid at that time, there is 2s. 10d. paid at this; out of which near a million and a half is paid for the support of one family; and a pension-list is added of upwards of 107,400l. Reflect on this, ye royal worshippers! and then say, whether such a system of government has been in a state of improvement or degeneracy?

deavour to redress. These are the principal causes why the poor in this town are more discontented than in many others. But hear them patiently; and suffer not any *mock-gentry* to come to his, or stare them out of countenance (as has been the case); nor even admit them, unless they will observe the rules of decency and good manners. These are the people who have been most instrumental in causing that misunderstanding which has so long existed betwixt you and the working people. By this means you will do good with your meetings; and by a fair and candid investigation I have no doubt but a perfect reconciliation will be the consequence: for a completion of which, and a continuance thereof, is the sincere wish of my heart.

Let us then persevere, my friends, in this best of causes; and when we have obtained our long-lost rights (annual election, universal suffrage, and the expulsion of all placemen and pensioners from the House of Commons), we shall effectually tear up the monster Oppression by the roots. The British tree of liberty will then appear in its pristine vigour; and the fruit, of which we have heard so much and tasted so little, will be brought to perfection; and every Briton receive his due proportion. Then, if we find it good and wholesome, we will cherish the tree for the sake of its fruit, regardless of what may be the product of that lately planted in France or any other country.

FINIS.



